MINUTES
EMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL
JANUARY 7, 2020

PLC: Rod Player, Ed Geary, Leon McElprang, Sherrel Ward, Kim McFarlane, Randal Stilson, JR Nelson

PL Staff: Commissioner Gil Conover, Carol Cox

Excused: Ray Petersen, Les Wilberg, Laren Huntsman

Public: James Wells (State Parks), Darren Olsen (MLNF), Nate Roberts (UDAF/GIP), Wayne Pahl (CCOHVA), Clay Crozier (Senator Romney), Chris Conrad (Price BLM), Steve Fluke (UDOGM), Larry Ellertson (Representative Curtis).

1. **Welcome:** Rod Player welcomed everyone to the meeting. He commented that this is only the third time in seventeen years that Ray has missed a Public Lands meeting. Ray is in Price this week participating in BLM Travel Route Management Planning meetings.

2. **Approval of Minutes: JR Nelson made a motion to approve the minutes dated December 3, 2019. The motion was seconded by Sherrel Ward. The motion passed**.

3. **Chairman Comments:** Rod informed everyone on annual Public Meeting/Ethics training on January 15th. Two sessions 3:00pm to 4:30pm or 5:30pm to 7:00pm. He encouraged the board to attend if possible. On January 22nd there will be a meeting to foster discussion on the Old Spanish Trail from 3:00pm to 4:30pm. Also on January 15th at 12:pm at the Castle Dale City Hall there will be a training/information meeting put on by the EC Travel Bureau for those interested in Airbnb. They will give information, experiences and talk about how to capitalize in the Airbnb market. Every two years the PL Board needs to elect a chairman and vice chairman for the council. **JR Nelson made a motion to suspend the rules and put Rod Player in as Chairman and Ed Geary as Vice Chairman. The motion was seconded by Sherrel Ward. The motion passed.** The applicants who have filed to fill the remainder of Bruce Wilson's term will go through an interview process.

4. **Commission Report on Emery Land Bill:** Commissioner Wilson read an email from Congressman Curtis's office regarding clarifying that they will be standing by the language in the bill. He indicated that Cody Stewart, Washington Consultant that the County has hired to represent Emery County with Public Lands Bill issues, is doing an excellent job on our behalf. He reported on Travel Route Management Planning Meetings he has attended. All views are documented and recorded. There is a route evaluation process after the information is gathered. Chris Conrad, Price BLM

expanded on the process. The San Rafael Desert Travel Route Management plan is nearing completion and will be sent for a decision February 28, 2020. The process is starting on the route evaluations for the San Rafael Swell Travel Route Management Plan and anticipate November 22 for a decision. The next travel plan they will be evaluating is Nine Mile. Rod asked where the decision on the RAC(advisory committee) for the Dingle Act is currently? Chris indicated that it has been signed to move forward. We can not do anything with it yet. Applications must go through the federal registry.

Rod asked if each of the Board members received a draft of a letter directed to John Pell (MLSNF), North Zone Fuels Tech, regarding fuels projects that they have planned. The letter states Emery County's support for Watershed Restoration Initiative projects in the county and within the state. Rod asked for a motion to approve, sign and send the letter to John Pell at the MLSNF. **Ed Geary made a motion to approve signing and sending the letter to John Pell (MLSNF). The motion was seconded by Leon McElprang. The motion passed.**

5. **Agency Reports and Council Member Comments:**
6. **A.** Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Chris Conrad, reported they are still getting more litigation over the Hunter Power Plant 200 acre land sale. They have also received litigation over the Dingel Act. They are meeting today with Diamond K (gypsum mining) on their mining permit extension. They have a new control engineer at the office, Doug Hansen. Regarding Coal mines , most permits are in the consultants hands. Nothing is pending in his office at this time. Kim McFarlane talked about issues with the website for making comments regarding the San Rafael Desert EIA. Chris suggested that the best way to make comments is by email or calling their office. He will check on the issues with the website.

   B. Marc Stilson (DWRi) reported that very little is happening. No new applications. In legislation HB105 strengthens the penalty associated with interfering with water facilities and illegal connections to the water or sewer systems. SB26 water banking bill, objective is to promote optimal use of the public's water, promote transparency and access to water markets, to promote temporary, flexible and low cost water transactions between water users, promote Utah's Agricultural economy by providing access to water resources and income for Utah's agriculture industry. Marc indicated that each area would have its own water bank and set the policy for that bank. He thinks this is a good idea to promote an easy way to access water. There are a lot of positives associated with this bill. He is sure this will be a hot topic in the legislature.

   C. Steven Fluke, Division of Oil, Gas and Mining (DOGM) reported that the coal regulatory group has been working on updating the Deer Creek permit completion of their reclamation. They are trying to also include areas that are being excluded from the permit due to the NRCS work in some of the canyons from fire damage. DOGM has completed the Big Bend Spring collection system for NEWUSSD along Huntington Creek. It is producing about 30 gallons per minute. Upcoming projects in Emery County, they have a project in the Buck Master area to close abandoned uranium

mines. So far, they have inventoried the area to the north of the interstate. They are working with BLM on this project.

D. DWR

E. Bryan Torgeson, State Institutional Trust Lands Administration(SITLA), reported that during their fall land auction they were able to sell what they call 'the mine road' (40 acres). SITLA is a cooperating agent in the BLM San Rafael Swell Travel Management Planning process. He commented that the Price BLM process is a very good process and they are reasonable on the routes. They were selling another piece of property up Cottonwood Canyon, up by Trail Mountain Mine. Wolverine Fuels purchased the property. (160 acres) It was a negotiated sale. They received two bids. Wolverine Fuels was the only offer that met SITLA's minimum, acceptable price. Wolverine intends to use the land for their coal operations.

F. Darren Olsen (MLNF) reported that winter is when they are busy working up analysis for the upcoming season projects, training, hiring, etc. They are currently working on an EA for three sheep allotments(South Skyline, Potter's and Booth) south of Highway 31. They will have a decision on that analysis in the next couple of months. Reeder Timber Sale, they are putting a package together to get that sale out this month. Mahogany Point is a fuels/wildlife project that they are doing. It is a continuation of an earlier project around Horn Mountain. The pines above Emery is another project that they are analysing for a coming up project. He commented that he appreciated the letter of support for their Watershed Restoration Initiative. Letters of support from participating agencies and entities are very helpful as these restoration projects are being evaluated. They continue to move forward with their Forest Plan process. Ray Petersen has been involved in the process from the beginning. They plan to have public meetings in the next couple of months as they work toward a draft plan. Roads and gates, they have some wildlife gates that they will be closing soon around Horn Mountain. Also ATV trails surrounding Horn Mountain, so Rock Canyon, Lord's Trail, Hole Trail, Black Dragon will be closed soon and remain closed until April 15th. These are high use winter range areas on the forest for deer and elk. Otherwise, all other roads continue to be open on the forest until March when the roads get soft and wet. They have had a great snowmobiling season so far this year. He indicated he would like to come to this group and present timber activity, show maps and ideas related to the Canyons Project and future sales of timber on the mountain. He will get with Ray to make that presentation in the next couple of months. He talked about Joe's Valley Dam and EWCD's proposal to take ownership of the dam (31 acres) from DOR. MLNF is in favor of that and is working with EWCD and DOR on this project. EWCD is also proposing to take ownership of 2,300 acres in and around the reservoir. MLNF has a campground there and has put in a lot of time and money into the boat ramp expansion and boat fisheries around the reservoir. MLNF currently has MOU's that they feel work to cover any maintenance needs and are not sure why there would be a desire to have the additional acreage. They have not seen anything in writing to address the intention for the additional acres. He commented that MLNF likes what the use is currently and does not want to see that change. There was some discussion regarding what is being proposed

and what needs to be done to move the process forward. There has not been anything officially, in writing, presented to MLNF.

G. James Wells, State Parks, Green River, not much activity due to fog, which is keeping tourist away. Regarding the conveyance he, Megan Blackwell, Regional Director and Aaron Farmer Green River will be going out to the backside of Wildhorse Butte to define areas where they can develop some additional campsites. Since the conveyance could take some time to complete, they want to get this area ready for surveying and show that they are serious about taking care of the land. They have received dozens of compliments on the condition of the park road entrance thanks to the Emery County Road Department.

H. Nate Roberts, Department of Agriculture talked about their grazing permit program. He announced a local grazing grazing group meeting January 13th in Green River where they will address issues that may be going on in their area. At the agency meeting the next day they talk about how to address the issues introduced by the permittees. He is still taking applications for range improvement grants until the end of next week. If you know of any maintenance projects contact him. Their annual Castle Valley Crop School will be February 5.

I. Washington Delegation. Clay Crozier, Senator Romney's Staff, talked about a Government Accountability Office Request regarding NRCS Emergency Watershed Funding. They will look at the funding that was sent and look at who received funding and how the funding was determined. They will be supporting Congressman Curtis's bill for the San Rafael Energy Research Facility in Emery County. Senator Romney will co-sponsor that bill with Congressman Curtis. The Senate omnibus bill that was passed in December regarding the wildhorse problem. Looks like there will be about $35 million allocated nation wide to mitigate the problem. He talked about the Trust Act and the spending bill. There were a lot of things that were good for Utah. Articles of impeachment have not come forward yet. This will shut down the Senate for a while. Hopefully they can get this fast and get back to passing bills and trying to fix things. Larry Ellertson, Congressman Curtis's Staff talked about the SRE Research facility and lawsuits related to the Dingle Act. He talked about Congressman Curtis's statement regarding the pre-emptive effort taken by President Trump in Irag. Things could escalate quickly. Bryan Torgeson commented that SITLA has been working with the BLM on San Rafael Desert Travel Management plan. It will be voted on by people who do not know anything about this area. It would be beneficial if Congressman Curtis and Senator Romney can do what they can to make sure that the work that was put into this plan is recognized. He also recommended that the Public Lands Council write a letter to the delegation to officially make sure this work is recognized and validated. Chris Conrad invited Larry and Clay to a briefing once they have a final something that they want to send to Washington. The more people that are involved in the details the better the decision. Larry indicated that what he is hearing is that you want to encourage DC to listen to the locals. Commissioner Wilson indicated that the Commissioners are going to draft a letter to the delegation and Cody Stuart to petition for their influence in assuring that a fair and balanced decision is made. Commissioner Wilson talked about what SUWA has been stirring up to affect decisions. Larry suggested that we need to be

diligent in keeping track of it and not just brush it off. Chris Conrad talked about conveyances. They would like to do the important ones first like the Recreation Area. However, the easier ones will be the Sheriff facility, Airport and Buckhorn Information Center. He indicated that they would love to do more with Goblin Valley/Temple Mountain and Millsite. He talked about the complexity and challenges with the Bison issue in Range Creek.

7. Additional Issues from Council Members: JR Nelson made a motion to write a letter to Congressional delegates and agencies stating that when travel and management plans go to Washington DC that they are not altered without local input. This decision should be left to the local BLM decision maker and staff who have been closest to the process and have real life, on the ground knowledge of the resources and issues. The motion was seconded by Sherral Ward. The motion passed. Ray Petersen will draft the letter and send it out to the board members for input. The letter needs to be sent to Washington asap.

Kim McFarlane talked about the San Rafael Desert Travel Management Plan. He suggested writing a letter from the Public Lands Council specifying our preference in plan.

Kim McFarlane made a motion to draft a letter from the Emery County Public Lands Council to BLM Price Field Office regarding the San Rafael Desert Travel Management Plan indicating Proposal D as the preferred travel plan. The motion was seconded by Leon McElprang. The motion passed. Kim suggested that the Trails Committee do the same.

8. Concerned Citizens with Emery County related issues: Sherrel Ward gave a precipitation report.

9. Adjourn